

# ARMY GROUND RISK-MANAGEMENT PUBLICATION COUNTERMEASURE

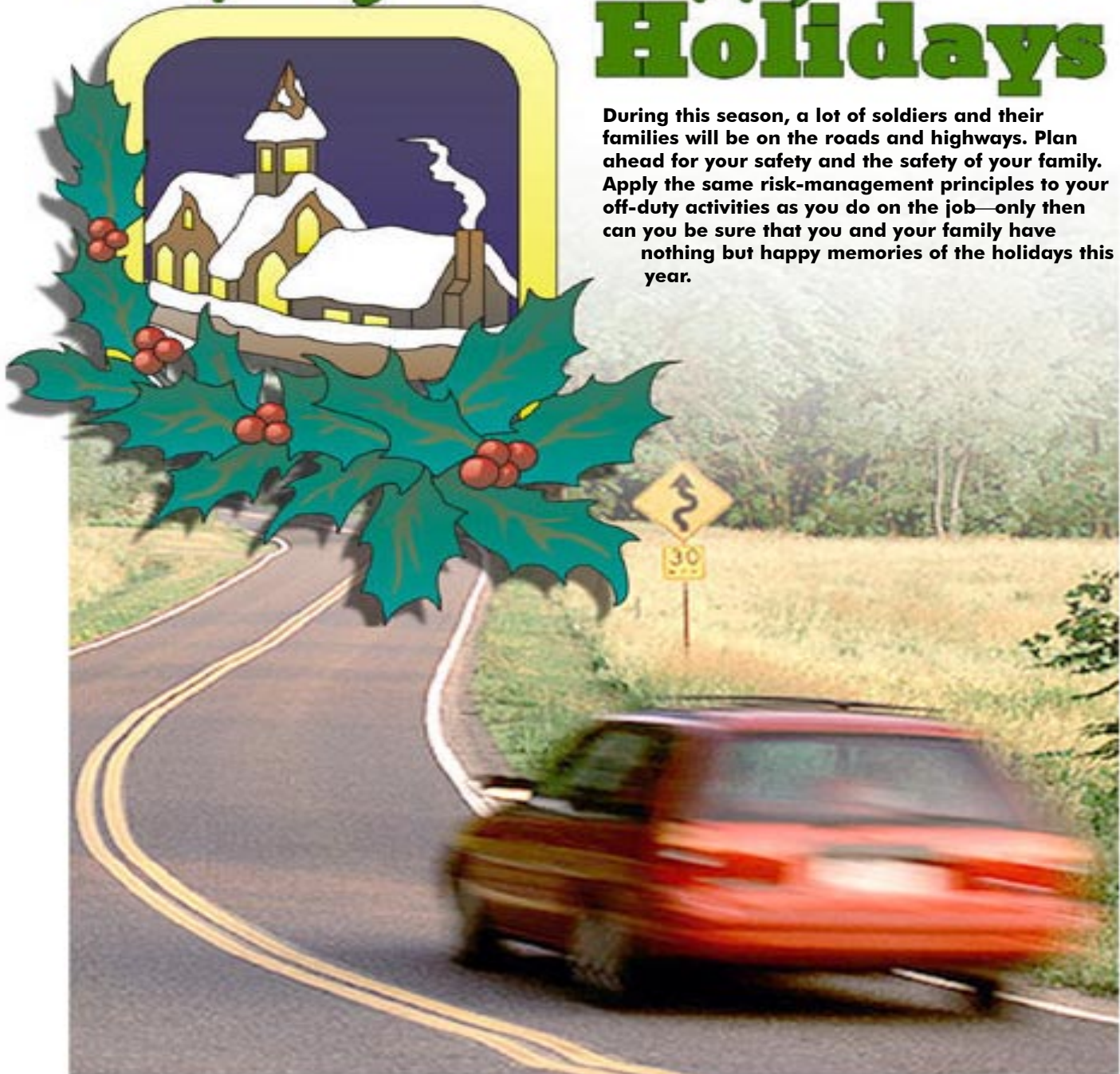
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DECEMBER 2000

## Keeping the Happy in the Holidays

During this season, a lot of soldiers and their families will be on the roads and highways. Plan ahead for your safety and the safety of your family. Apply the same risk-management principles to your off-duty activities as you do on the job—only then can you be sure that you and your family have nothing but happy memories of the holidays this year.



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## The Official Safety Magazine for Army Ground Risk-Management

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### Keeping the Happy in the Holidays

A lot of soldiers, civilians, and families will be traveling to visit family and friends this holiday season. Ensure you have a holiday safety plan in place and that everyone is aware of how to identify and combat the hazards they will encounter on the roads.

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### Suicide Prevention is Everybody's Business

Every member of the military community—leaders, peers, subordinates, and family members—can prevent a suicide if they know what signs to look for and what actions to take.

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### Variety is the Spice of Life.

Leaders and soldiers are always looking for ways to break the boredom of physical training. One way is unit-sporting events. But, be careful. These events can cause serious injuries to our troops without first mitigating the risk.

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### The Hazards of Hurrying

We're all familiar with the more common causes of accidental deaths and injuries—such as drinking and driving or contact sports. However, there's another unseen hazard out there that's killing folks; it's known as hurrying.

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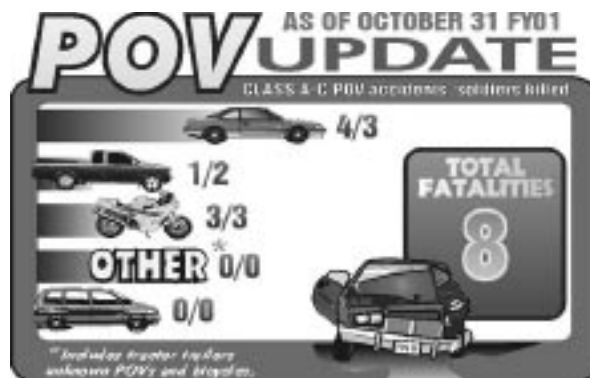
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Gene M. LaCoste  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Commanding Officer

# Keeping the Happy in the Holidays

The holiday season means a time for joy, worship, parties, and good times. For many soldiers, civilian employees, and their family members, the holidays will mean a time of traveling long distances to visit family and friends. Today, with close to 4 million miles of American roads to travel, the likelihood of becoming the victim of an accident greatly increases. Unfortunately, privately owned vehicles (POVs) are traditionally the major cause of these needless losses.

POV accidents are the number one killer of soldiers. Young soldiers, PV2 through SGT, are most likely at risk. At the end of FY00, 70 percent of all Army fatalities were due to POV accidents.

Command involvement, particularly at battery/company level, can reinforce the defensive skills and attitudes necessary for safe holidays. Each leader should place soldier safety as the highest priority. Prepare soldiers for the holiday period by assisting them in developing a safety attitude and an awareness of the hazards they will face.

Units should conduct vehicle safety inspections prior to their personnel departing for the holidays. As you conduct pre-holiday safety briefings, include the hazards generally known to be associated with the Christmas-New Year holiday period.

Give special emphasis to drinking and driving, excessive speed, driver fatigue, failure to yield the right of way, and failure to use seatbelts. At least one or more of these factors is present in virtually every fatal vehicle accident involving soldiers. Get your soldiers involved. Encourage group discussions of personal experiences, which resulted in lessons learned.

The Safety Center has the POV Toolbox (2nd Ed.) that will help leaders

incorporate risk management into holiday accident prevention programs and will help in POV accident prevention throughout the year. If you would like to have a copy, call me or download it from our web site: <http://safety.army.mil> (click TOOLS).

I urge everyone to make safety the number one priority for the holidays and the New Year. Whether you're traveling, getting together with friends, or staying at home with your family, be smart! Be safe. Be responsible.

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# Suicide Prevention is Everybody's Business

*"I love you and the kids, but I just can't go on living if I can't have you in my life. I am just overwhelmed with life. I hurt—my head, my throat, my guts. I can't think straight anymore. I'm snowed under at work. I feel I have become ineffective. I just don't want to deal with it anymore. I'm sorry, Honey..."*

According to recent literature, the Army suicide rate has increased over the past 2 years to one of the highest suicide rates since the 1970s.

In the first 5 days of the new millennium, there were six confirmed suicides in the Army. In 1999, the Army alone confirmed 73 suicides and 5 undetermined deaths, some of which are suspected to be suicides. This translates to 15.23 suicides per 100,000 soldiers (excluding undetermined deaths). According to Robert Burns, a military writer, during the past 10 years in the Army, suicides were the second leading cause of death next to accidents. Also, in the past 10 years, about 10 times more troops died at their own hand as opposed to hostile fire. In fact, during the 1990s, the Army lost an entire battalion worth of soldiers to suicide (803).

## Who is responsible for suicide prevention?

Every member of the military community is responsible. Education and proactive intervention are the greatest weapons against suicide. If the military community is well educated in the area of suicide prevention, it is very likely that the number of suicides will decrease. Leaders, peers, subordinates, family members and all military community members can prevent a suicide if they know what signs to look for and what actions to take.

## Who is at risk?

In the broadest sense, everyone is—but not in equal measure. Statistics indicate that white males under 25 years of age have the highest suicide rates in the Army. However, the highest proportion of suicides occurs with soldiers 40 and higher. It is common that the

individual has suffered a recent breakup of a marriage or other close personal relationship. Frequently, legal and/or financial problems are present. It is also common to have a past history of self-destructive acts or suicide attempts. Suicides are usually a response to overwhelming personal crises often experienced in the context of a preexisting vulnerability to developing a psychiatric disorder (such as depression and/or substance abuse), and is typically characterized by feelings of loneliness, hopelessness, and helplessness.

Suicidal people often believe they have no support system or that there is no one they can talk to. They tend to demonstrate a relative lack of problem-solving or life-coping skills. And as mentioned above, they may also suffer from a depressive or substance abuse disorder.

Suicidal people usually exhibit obvious warning signs. Some signs are more apparent than others. While non-suicidal people can have some of these traits in their lives, the more of these a person has, the more at-risk they are for suicide. But keep in mind, a person doesn't have to fit the suicide profile to a "T" to be at-risk.

## Immediate danger signs:

- Talking or hinting about suicide, to include statement about feeling suicidal.
- Having an organized plan to commit suicide, the means to carry out this plan, and the intent to commit suicide.
- Having the desire to be dead.
- Obsession with death, sad music, or poetry.
- Themes of death in letters or artwork.
- Tying up loose ends (finalizing personal affairs).
- Giving away personal items/possessions.

## Common warning signs:

- Dramatic or obvious drop in job performance.
- Unkempt personal appearance.
- Loss of a loved one, job, status, or money.

- Feelings of hopelessness and/or helplessness.
- Family history of suicide.
- Made previous suicide attempt.
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Withdrawal.
- Loss of interest in hobbies.
- Reckless behavior, self-mutilation.
- Physical health complaints, change/loss of appetite.
- Complaints of significant sleep difficulties.

### What you can do

Everyone in the military community is qualified to intervene. Who knows a soldier better than his/her family, unit members, superiors, peers, and subordinates? Don't be afraid to confront or reach out to someone you believe may be depressed or suicidal. **You can make a difference.** The biggest difference a leader can make is to train all unit members on how to identify suicidal behavior. Leaders can contact their unit chaplains to obtain further education on suicide prevention for their units. The U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM), in conjunction with the American Association of Suicidology has just published a Resource Training Manual for suicide prevention training. The manual contains three lesson plans for individual, leader and formal gatekeeper training. The manual is available on the USACHPPM web site at <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhwp/default/htm>.

If you suspect someone you know is suicidal, the first step is to ask that person if they are

suicidal. Listen to the individual and take what he says very seriously. Do not ignore the suicidal person; it is better to offer help early than to regret not helping later. The first step is to offer support, no matter what the problem may be. Don't leave anyone alone if you think the risk of suicide is imminent. Assist the suicidal person in obtaining help. Contact the unit commander or first sergeant, chaplain, Mental Health Services, or your local hospital emergency room if you believe a person is suicidal. Here's an example:

*Sergeant First Class Smith notices Staff Sergeant Jones has been showing up late to work during the past several weeks. When SFC Smith asks SSG Jones if anything is wrong, he replies that his wife is leaving him and taking custody of his two children. He adds that he has had problems sleeping and concentrating and feels hopeless and trapped in his situation. He mentions that he has contemplated "ending it all" to stop the pain.*

*SFC Smith finds out SSG Jones owns a handgun and, in fact, has thought of using it to end his life. Because of the situation, SFC Smith alerts his first sergeant and they, together with SSG Jones, decide to call the chaplain and the local mental health office for advice and support.*

Remember that a soldier's buddy remains the most effective first-line of defense for detecting and preventing a suicide from occurring.

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## Clarification on Propane Space Heaters

**I**n reference to the article "Tent Heaters Aren't the Problem, Operators Are" (Oct 00), we want to clarify that the Safety Center does not endorse the use of propane space heaters for military use. Proper use of any type of heater is a command responsibility. The decision to use any type of non-standard heater must be made at appropriate command levels after a complete risk assessment has been performed. The command must also ensure that all operators of non-standard heaters are fully trained regarding use, maintenance, and risks.

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# Make a Difference!

In fiscal year 2000, the Army enjoyed one of its best years ever in terms of safety performance. In aviation, both the number of fatalities and the Class A and B flight accident rates were reduced to all-time lows. In ground accident prevention, FY00 was the second-lowest year ever in terms of the number of ground and privately owned vehicle fatalities.

Each and every one of you can take credit for these safety successes. All of us rolling up our sleeves and working together made a difference. It was an extraordinary effort of—

- Leadership involvement in safety programs.
- Safety professionals—civilians and military—helping commanders make informed risk decisions.
- NCOs enforcing standards and making on-the-spot corrections.
- Individual soldiers exhibiting the self-discipline to follow standards while resisting

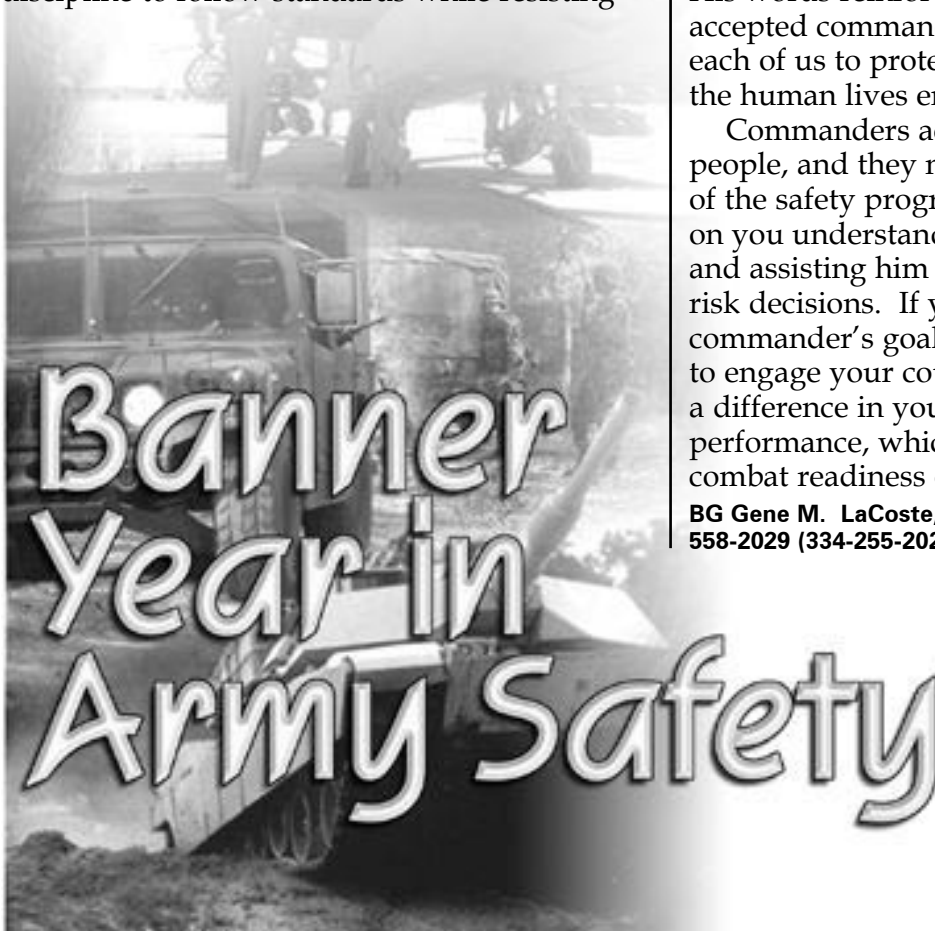
the temptation to take shortcuts sometimes perceived necessary due to the OPTEMPO.

We all can be, and rightfully should be, proud of the Army's FY00 safety performance, but there's a word of caution necessary as well: these achievements will not be easy to sustain. They will be even harder to surpass. Individually and collectively, we will have to seek even better ways of making a difference in our Army.

GEN Shinseki, the Army's Chief of Staff, is adamant that he is the Safety Officer for The Army. He is equally adamant that each commander with a flag outside his or her unit or organization is the Safety Officer for that unit or organization. At the third quarter safety in-progress review, GEN Shinseki stated that "our business is a dangerous business, and command involvement is the key to our success. When I talk safety and why we are having problems, I talk to commanders." His words reinforce to those of us who have accepted command responsibility that it is up to each of us to protect and ensure the safety of the human lives entrusted to our care.

Commanders across the Army are busy people, and they need your help. The success of the safety program depends, in large part, on you understanding your commander's needs and assisting him or her in making sound risk decisions. If you are relevant to your commander's goals, he or she will find time to engage your counsel. You **can** make a difference in your organization's safety performance, which will ultimately enhance the combat readiness of our Army.

**BG Gene M. LaCoste, Director of Army Safety, DSN 558-2029 (334-255-2029)**



# Survival of the Fittest

## Variety is the Spice of Life

*This is the final article in a 5-part series of articles on physical training and their accident causes. This issue is dedicated to unit sports-related injuries.*

Variety is the spice of life, especially when it breaks the boredom of physical training. Leaders and soldiers are always looking for a change to the “Daily Dozen” and formation running.

One of the ways to break the monotony is with unit sporting events. But let me warn you, if leaders and soldiers do not prepare and control these physical training events, soldiers can get seriously injured and lose time from work—and some may sustain injuries permanently.

During the past year, 150 soldiers have been seriously injured while participating in unit sports. Injuries include broken ribs and legs, dislocated arms, and numerous concussions. These injuries have cost the Army over \$400K, not to mention the lingering aches and pains that individual soldiers may have to live with for life.

Basketball was the top accident producer, with football and softball not far behind. The most common injury received while participating in these sporting events was not from physical contact, but from the individual changing direction quickly and slipping on the playing surface; i.e., court, wet grass or loose gravel/sand), resulting in a broken ankle or leg. In one such instance, a soldier was trying to evade the opposing team’s cover and dodged the pursuer and slipped on dew-covered grass, breaking his ankle and wrist. Other less serious injuries occurred from improper warm-ups or the lack of stretching, causing torn leg muscles and injured tendons.

How do we mitigate these risks without removing the esprit de corps? Leaders must plan and inform participants of the proper equipment and rules required to play. Participants should be prepared with the proper equipment, such as wearing shoes



designed for the sport—shoes with cleats provide better traction while performing fast starts, stops and changing directions.

### Tips to Mitigate Risk:

- Always stretch and warm up muscles prior to physical activities.
- Postpone event if thunderstorms or other severe weather conditions are anticipated.
- Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after vigorous activities. Avoid alcohol (it causes dehydration).
- Inspect the play area and equipment for hazards.
- Stay out of high grass to avoid holes and ruts. Don’t run when you can’t see where your feet will land.
- Use the necessary personal protective equipment.
- Cool down after intense physical activity. It helps lessen stiffness and soreness felt in muscles.

Remember that PT should enhance your physical fitness and not result in an injury that requires medical treatment or ends your military career.

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# The Hunt Is On...

In looking at the 10 hunting accidents in the Army since FY95, two things are obvious. First, the law of gravity still works—just ask the three hunters who fell out of tree stands or trees. Secondly, firearms still go off unexpectedly—just ask the two hunters who shot themselves instead of their game. Of the 10 accidents, 2 resulted in fatalities and 2 others led to permanent injuries. These were accidents that could have been avoided had the hunters involved practiced safe gun handling and properly used their firearm's safeties. Let's look at the narratives from some of these accident reports, then look at how they might have been avoided.

## Accident 1

A soldier went up the tree with his bow and stood waiting for a deer. When a large buck approached his position, he fired his arrow and suddenly lost his balance and fell off the tree stand.

**Lessons learned.** Excitement is often the reason for missed shots or carelessness. A hunter needs to have his wits about him and be completely alert while carrying a weapon. Be sure your safety belt is on and secure while climbing to the tree stand or standing on one.

## Accident 2

A soldier was deer hunting when it began to rain. As the soldier was climbing up a rocky hill, he slipped and dropped his shotgun. The shotgun fired upon impact with the ground and struck the soldier in the leg.

**Lessons learned.** Responsible firearms

handling is the most important skill for hunters to practice. Whenever negotiating an obstacle, always ensure weapon is unloaded and on "SAFE." Be prepared to control the muzzle of your gun. To keep from slipping, wear non-slip boots or sturdy shoes.

## Accident 3

A soldier was hunting ducks on a river in the early morning hours. Apparently, he entered the river to retrieve a duck and became entangled in debris and was unable to swim free. His body was recovered several weeks later.

**Lessons learned.** Never go hunting alone. Always use the buddy system. Whenever hunting near or in water, always wear a personal flotation device (PFD).

## Accident 4

A soldier and three friends were hunting

## TEN COMMANDMENTS OF SHOOTING SAFETY

1. Treat every firearm or bow with the same respect shown for a loaded gun or nocked bow.
2. Always point the muzzle in a safe direction.
3. Be sure of your target and what is in front and beyond your target.
4. Unload firearms when not in use.
5. Handle ammunition and arrows with caution.
6. Know your safe zone-of-fire and stick to it.
7. Control your emotions—don't get excited and forget to be safe.
8. Wear hearing and eye protection when shooting; wear red/orange clothing at all times in the woods.
9. Don't drink alcohol and handle firearms; avoid prescription drugs that can dull the senses.
10. Use some risk management before the outing—think of what could go wrong and what you will do to prevent it.



on base when they became separated. Approximately 10 p.m., one of the friends heard a sound and thought it was a bear and shot the soldier in the stomach. The soldier died.

**Lessons learned.** Be sure of your target and what is beyond. Never shoot at a flash of color or a sound. Never shoot at a shape in a tree or bush. Soldiers should be taught to take all proper equipment with them while hunting. This is not limited to the required orange vest, but also a map of the area, compass, whistle, flashlight, and a first-aid kit should be standard. A cell phone wouldn't be too bad either. Avoid horseplay with a firearm. Plan your hunt so you can return to your car or camp at least 1 hour before dark. Leave your hunt plan with family or friends.

### **Accident 5**

A soldier leaned his 12-gauge shotgun against the side of his truck, and then was injured when it fell and discharged.

**Lessons learned.** A responsible hunter thinks about every action and makes every action safe. The soldier should have unloaded his shotgun prior to returning to his vehicle and positioned it to "SAFE." By placing a loaded weapon against a vehicle is just begging to have it fall over with the slightest jostle.

## **A Day of Hunting**

We saw this humorous chronicle of a day of hunting in a base newspaper. The things that happened to the fictional hunter may seem ridiculous. However, when we looked at some of our reports of hunting accidents, we realized that truth really is sometimes stranger than fiction.

0200 – Alarm clock rang.  
0300 – Hunting partner arrived, dragged me out of bed.  
0310 – Threw everything except the kitchen sink into pickup.  
0330 – Left for deep woods.  
0500 – Drove back home to pick up gun.  
0530 – Drove like crazy to get to the woods before daylight.  
0700 – Set up camp. Forgot the tent.  
0730 – Headed for the woods.  
0735 – Saw eight deer.  
0737 – Gun didn't fire. All I heard was "click."  
0738 – Loaded gun while watching deer go over the hill.  
0930 – Headed back to camp.  
1000 – Still looking for camp.  
1001 – Realized I didn't know where camp was.  
1200 – Fired gun for help. Ate wild berries.  
1205 – Ran out of bullets. Eight deer came back.  
1300 – Stomach felt strange.  
1310 – Realized berries were poisonous.  
1335 – Rescued.  
1336 – Rushed to hospital to have stomach pumped.  
1530 – Arrived back at camp.  
1540 – Left camp to kill deer.  
1550 – Returned to camp for bullets.  
1600 – Loaded gun. Left camp again.  
1630 – Emptied gun on squirrel that was bugging me.  
1700 – Arrived at camp. Saw deer grazing near pickup.  
1701 – Loaded gun.  
1702 – Fired gun.  
1703 – Missed deer. Shot pickup.  
1735 – Hunting partner arrived in camp dragging dead deer.  
1736 – Repressed desire to shoot hunting partner.  
1737 – Fell into campfire.  
1800 – Changed clothes. Threw burned ones in fire.  
1805 – Took pickup. Left hunting partner and his deer in camp.  
1815 – Pickup boiled over because of gunshot hole in block.  
1816 – Started walking.  
1820 – Stumbled and fell. Dropped gun in mud.  
1825 – Met bear.  
1827 – Fired gun. Barrel plugged with mud and blew up.  
1829 – Climbed tree.  
2000 – Bear left. Wrapped \*\$^&!% gun around tree.  
2230 – Home at last.  
Next day – Watched football game on TV. Slowly tore hunting license into itty-bitty pieces.

—Excerpt from *Safetyline*

### **Follow these additional hunter tips—**

- Familiarize yourself with the hunting area.
- Familiarize yourself with local and post hunting regulations.
- Inspect equipment such as deer stands and ladders for loose parts before each use. Check all stress points.
- Test your tree stand slightly off the ground to make certain it is safe.
- Always carry basic first-aid kit.
- Use the buddy system and never hunt alone. Plan your hunt and hunt your plan. Tell someone where you are going and when you

plan to return.

- Expect the unexpected and watch for holes, poisonous critters, and other hazards.

- Take a hunter-education course before going to the woods. Personnel born on or after 1 Aug 77 must satisfactorily complete a state certified hunter education course.

Remember: The only way it's safe is if there is no round in the chamber and the weapon is on SAFE.

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## **Risk Management Pointer**

Safety is a hunter's responsibility and education is an essential step in the right direction. Hunter Education Programs emphasize the importance of wildlife management, explain laws and regulations, and encourage safe handling of firearms and ammunition. Contact your base Outdoor Recreation Office.

# **The Hazards of Hurrying**

We're all familiar with the "big-name" causes of accidental deaths and injuries—things like drinking and driving, tornadoes, hurricanes, contact sports, power lines and drugs. But there's another killer out there—one that is often not recognized even though it can be equally devastating. Like carbon monoxide, we're not aware of its dangers until it's too late. This lurking, unseen hazard is known as hurrying.

### **Why is hurrying dangerous?**

We often associate the dangers of hurrying with reckless driving and speeding. When we're late or flustered, we become more stressed and tense and tend to lose patience with those who are "in our way." To make matters worse, we're more likely to forget things and make bad decisions. Here are a couple of examples of where hurrying caused bad accidents:

- Witnesses to a horrible bus accident in Nashville, TN, stated that the bus driver ran two consecutive red lights before crashing off a bridge over I-40. Two teenagers died when the bus crushed their Volkswagen bug to a height of 18 inches. The driver was trying to make up for lost time on his route.

- A witness to a deadly Amtrak train accident in Illinois confirmed an engineer's report that a truck driver tried to snake through the crossing gate to beat the train.

Hurrying becomes dangerous when it overcomes your sense of caution, clouds your judgment, and leads you to make mistakes. These mistakes come in two disastrous flavors—doing something wrong, or not doing the right thing.

### **Doing something wrong**

When we're in a hurry, we tend to make mistakes—such as selecting the wrong switch, using an incorrect tool or spare part, driving too fast, and ignoring warnings. If we're really rushed, we begin reacting impulsively rather than rationally. Here are two unfortunate

examples of people who reacted without thinking:

■ Two young construction workers in Arizona were in a hurry one Christmas Eve. They hadn't quite finished their holiday shopping and were rushing to take down a 40-foot aluminum ladder. Both were instantly killed when they grabbed the ladder as it toppled onto a 7,200-volt power line.

■ An experienced private pilot was in the habit of raising the flaps during landing to "glue the plane to ground." One day while landing a Beech Bonanza, he reached over and, with a single swift motion, depressed a safety, then lifted the gear switch. The propeller struck the tarmac and the plane "glued itself to the runway" much sooner than expected.

Psychologists call these actions "errors of commission." Recent studies suggest 60 percent of hurrying mistakes are the result of people doing the wrong thing.

### **Not doing the right thing**

When we're hurrying, we tend to take shortcuts—sometimes failing to do things that we should. Psychologists classify these types of mistakes as "errors of omission." Organizations as well as individuals can make this type of error as shown in the following example:

In January 1986, NASA was pressured to launch the Challenger space shuttle without delay. The Challenger's mission was to launch a Haley's Comet probe just before the Russians launched theirs. NASA also needed to launch the first teacher in space before the President's State of the Union Address, which focused on education. NASA management chose to launch the Challenger in record cold temperatures (28°F) despite the protests of engineers who voiced concerns about the integrity of the rocket booster O-rings. They pointed out that the lowest previous shuttle launch temperature was 53°F and that the boosters had never been tested below 40°F. Just over one minute into the flight, an O-ring on the right-hand booster failed and the Challenger exploded, killing all seven on board.

### **Why do we hurry?**

Understanding why we hurry is important to reducing our tendency to hurry and will help us manage the risks when we are rushed. The

following are four basic reasons why we hurry.

### **One: High workload**

Obviously, we hurry when we have more tasks, deadlines and responsibilities than we can handle. Unfortunately, the information age has increased the daily workload for nearly everyone. Gone are the days of 2 to 3-week suspense times—now responses are expected soon after the boss's e-mail is read. What about downsizing and "doing more with less?" Consider how many people were employed at your job 5 years ago compared to today. Have the responsibilities and workload been lessened, or simply absorbed by remaining workers? As workloads push us to the limit of our abilities, we're continually forced to operate in the hurry-up mode.

### **Two: Running late**

Thankfully, reliable transportation is now available for nearly everyone. Unfortunately, the downside of this modern convenience is that we're expected to be at more places and be at those places on time. We frequently check our watches for fear that we're running late for our next commitment. It takes only a small delay to put a kink in our schedule and have us rushing to beat the clock.

### **Three: Psychological predisposition**

Many of us have a natural disposition toward "Type A" behavior. People with Type A behavior struggle to achieve more in less time. They have trouble relaxing or getting work off their mind and often try to do two things at once—such as eating and working. Type A's have a strong sense of time urgency and are particularly susceptible to the hazards associated with hurrying.

### **Four: Professional pressures**

Many supervisors view employees who work fast to meet deadlines as being especially productive and motivated. This behavior is often reinforced with extra praise or early promotion.

### **Remedies for hurrying**

Libraries are filled with books on stress management, mainly because stress poses a danger to our continued health and well-being. By comparison, there are no well-known books or best sellers on the subject of hurry

management. But there is hope. If you are prone to hurry or forced to hurry any activity, the following techniques will help you reduce the chances of making a mistake or causing an accident.

### **Slow down**

Obviously, the best method to control hurrying is to slow down. This requires two actions: (1) recognizing when we are hurried, and (2) consciously forcing ourselves to slow down. Simply realizing when our "HURRY" light is on is half the battle. Since rushing almost always causes stress, recognizing the symptoms of stress is essential to knowing when we are too hurried. Those symptoms include tightness in the chest, dizziness, shaking, irritable behavior, and high blood pressure. By watching out for these, we'll know when it's time to slow down and exercise caution. And we can slow down by taking a break, concentrating on one task at a time, or finishing one task before going on to another.

### **"Wind the clock"**

A tried-and-true pilot technique for handling overwhelming situations is to take a moment to "wind the clock." Instead of panicking when things become stressful, momentarily step away from the situation, calm down, and then re-attack the problem in a more rational manner.

### **B-safe**

Surrounding yourself with people who aren't prone to rushing—easygoing Type B people—will also help you slow down. Most of us try to fit in by imitating the people around us. Studies suggest when Type A people are exposed to Type B people; the Type A folks tend to slow down.

### **Time management**

As mentioned earlier, being late or delayed

is a major reason why many people hurry. Managing our time wisely can help us set priorities, making sure we get the most important things done first so we're not rushed trying to do the remaining tasks. In addition, effective time management helps us to plan enough time to avoid running late or having to cut our travel times too close. It's a shame insurance companies don't offer reduced

premiums for people who leave early enough to avoid having to rush while driving to work or appointments. We'd have fewer injuries and deaths due to careless and reckless drivers.

### **Just say "No!"**

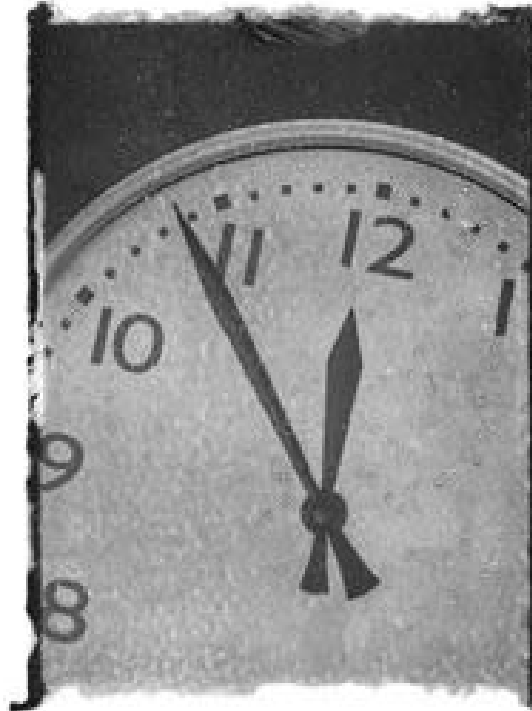
One of my former bosses used to tell me, "No good deed goes unpunished." In other words, the better you are at your job, the more work you will get. If you find yourself in this category, you need to learn to diplomatically say "no" to additional responsibilities when you're already tapped out. Otherwise you'll be stuck

trying to do more in less time by hurrying.

### **Haste makes waste**

Today, more than ever before, we are expected to do more in less time and to be in more places on time. As a result, we're even more vulnerable to the hazards of hurrying. Chances are your last brush with death or injury happened because you (or someone else) were in an extreme hurry. Speed limit signs aren't just limited to our streets and highways—nearly every activity we do has its own invisible speed limits. The more we exceed these "speed limits," the more we endanger others and ourselves. By recognizing the perils of rushing and being aware of when we are hurrying too much, we can defeat this deadly menace. Otherwise, haste will continue to lay waste to our lives and the lives of others around us.

—Courtesy of Road & Rec Magazine



# Saved By The Belt Seatbelts... Is Your Life Worth It?

**A**fter a wonderful evening of enjoying a Southeast Texas Crab Festival with my family, we started home to rest up for Sunday morning church services and a relaxing Sunday. In the time it took to blink, our lives could have been forever changed. Let me tell you why my family and I are alive today.

While driving down a rural Texas highway, a gentleman who had just went through a fast food drive-thru was distracted and failed to yield to our vehicle. There was no time to react. Although my wife slammed on the brakes and tried to swerve, we hit the other vehicle causing it to spin around and hit us a second time. At 45 miles per hour, this could have resulted in serious injury or even death.

Fortunately, we are a safety conscious family and live by the 15-second seatbelt check rule. Each time we get into a vehicle, we first strap the children in their car seats and check both the seats and the children to ensure the car seats do not move and the shoulder belts are tight allowing only a one-finger gap. Then we ensure everyone in the car, to include the backseat passenger (in this case, it was me), is securely buckled in. Only after all passengers are buckled in and the car seats are checked will we move the vehicle.

This may sound like a scene from the Brady Bunch, but let me add to the story. About three months ago, the Texas Department of Public Safety hosted a child safety restraint demonstration at a local car dealership. During this demonstration, law enforcement officers offered families important advice and hands-on instruction on the correct use of child safety seats and seatbelts, and supervised participants while they installed the car seats. Attendees were taught how to properly secure the safety seats to the vehicle

using the adult seatbelt system and how to secure the child within the restraint.

It was a good thing we attended this class because tragic results could have happened. By Texas law, I was not required to wear a seatbelt in the backseat; however, I would have gone through the windshield if I hadn't. Additionally, the children could have received great injury or even death had the car seats moved. Moreover, the force of the collision would surely have caused the children to move violently if they were not tight in their car seats. I believe they are alive because I took the time to properly install the car seats and ensure they were correctly secured.

What are my recommendations for my Army family? First, everyone in the car buckles up. It doesn't matter if we are going one block or 2,000 miles—**buckle up!** Ensure children age 4 and under or any child under 40 inches or 40 pounds, regardless of age, is in a child safety seat. Have your car seats checked for proper installation and serviceability. Additionally, don't eat or use a cellular phone while driving. These types of distractions can cause you or another person much pain and injury...or even worse.

Finally, the installation safety officer and Provost Marshal should conduct quarterly seatbelt checkpoints. It may require some

extra effort and manpower, but spending one Saturday or payday outside the PX or commissary each quarter to save the lives of our children is well worth it. I welcome all comments and would love to talk with installation officials about implementing my suggestion. Safety is key when it comes to our soldiers and family members.

**POC: 1LT(P) Brian L. Smith, 596<sup>th</sup> Transportation Group (Terminal), Beaumont, TX, DSN 259-3821 (409-784-3821), smithbr@mtmc.army.mil**

**It doesn't  
matter if we  
are going  
one block or  
2,000 miles—  
buckle up!**



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*From our family to  
yours, we wish you  
a truly happy,  
healthy, and safe  
holiday season.*